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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 240955Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1822
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0507
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0814
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000943

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: POLICE ARREST 11 HINDRAF SUPPORTERS AT PM'S OFFICE

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 913 -- GOM BANS HINDRAF

[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 810 -- UPROAR OVER ISA

[1](#)1. (SBU) Police arrested 11 Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) supporters, including K. Shanti, wife of defacto exiled HINDRAF Chairman Waytha Moorthy and brother to HINDRAF leader P. Uthayakumar, on October 23 while the group attempted to deliver a letter to Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's office in the administrative capital Putrajaya. The letter, written by Waytha Moorthy's six-year old daughter, asked for the release of five HINDRAF leaders, detained without trial under Internal Security Act since December [1](#)2007. The supporters sought the release of HINDRAF leaders prior to Deepavali, a major Hindu religious holiday held this year on October 27. Police indicated they detained the group under the Societies Act for illegal assembly. According to the act, which the Home Ministry also used on October 15 to ban HINDRAF, public assemblies larger than five persons require a police permit. Per our sources close to the scene, the 11 supporters avoided displaying any identification as HINDRAF members due to concern over arrest for association with an illegal organization.

[1](#)2. (SBU) According to media reports, police offered to release Shanti late on October 23 so she could take home her six-year-old daughter, P. Vwaishhnnavi, rather than spend the night in jail, but Shanti refused the offer out of solidarity with the other 10 detainees. On the morning of October 24, police released Shanti on police bail, and brought the remaining 10 HINDRAF supporters before a magistrate. Court proceedings moved slowly on October 24, in part because the police did not allow the detainees to have access to lawyers the night before. Police sought to remand the detainees for two weeks while police investigated. The Magistrate instead ordered the detainees remanded for three days, indicating possible release the day before Deepavali. About 50 HINDRAF supporters and family members were present outside the courthouse, but along with journalists, were denied entry to the proceedings.

KEITH